

1998 SUGAR AND SPECIALTY CROP HIGHLIGHTS

SUGAR

Sugar production and acres harvested were at a record low. Sugar production for 1998 dipped 1 percent from the previous year to 354,000 tons of 96° raw sugar. Fewer acres for harvest accounted for the lower production. Plantations were able to harvest 2.7 million tons of sugarcane from this acreage for an average yield of 90.0 tons of sugarcane per acre. Sugar prices during 1998 increased 3 percent to \$368 per ton of 96° raw sugar, this resulted in a total value of \$130.3 million for raw sugar, an increase of 2 percent from 1997.

COFFEE

Hawaii farmers harvested 9.5 million pounds (parchment basis) of coffee during the 1998-99 season, up 1 percent from the previous season, and the largest harvest since the 1963-64 season. Farm prices averaged \$2.60 per pound (parchment basis), down 13 percent from the previous season. The value of farm sales is estimated at \$24.7 million, down 12 percent from the 1997-98 season.

On Hawaii island, 3.5 million pounds (parchment basis) of coffee was harvested during the 1998-99 season, up 23 percent from the previous season and the largest harvest in 26 seasons. While weather conditions were less than ideal, it was an improvement from previous seasons. As a result, average yields increased by 7 percent. Also contributing to the boost in output were improved cultural practices and a 14 percent increase in harvested acreage.

Oahu, Kauai, and Maui combined to produce 6.0 million pounds (parchment basis) during the 1998-99 season, down 8 percent from the previous season. Yields varied among the individual counties, but the alternate bearing nature of the crop was a major reason for the over decline in output.

MACADAMIA NUTS

Hawaii's 1998-99 macadamia nut crop is estimated at a 57.5 million pounds net, wet-in-shell, 0.5 million pounds less than last year's crop. Weather conditions had mixed effects on production. Early season expectations anticipated the 1998-99 crop would be down 9 percent from the previous season due to drought reduced yields in Ka'u and South Kona. However, better than expected yields from other areas of the Hawaii county and Maui limited the decline to just 1 percent. Orchards in areas receiving sufficient rainfall experienced better fruit set and additional flowering extending the harvesting season this past spring. Total acreage in crop remained unchanged from the previous year at 20,200 acres. Harvested acreage totaled 19,200 acres, the same as the previous year. The farm price for net, wet in-shell macadamia nuts averaged 65.0 cents per pound, dropping 10.0 cents from the 1997-98 average and lowest since the 1979-80 crop year. The farm value for the 1998-99 crop is estimated at \$37.4 million, 14 percent less than the previous year. Growers and processors point to increased world production, weakness in the Asian economy, and more aggressive marketing of foreign nuts in the U.S. as reasons for the lower returns.